

Investigating Systems Alignment of Multi-Sector Agencies to Address Child Maltreatment in St. Louis

Strategies to Achieve Alignment, Collaboration, and Synergy Across Delivery and Financing Systems

Research-in-Progress Webinar
June 23, 2021
12-1pm ET

Welcome Carrington Lott, MPH – Systems for Action

Panelists Melissa Jonson-Reid, PhD – Washington University in St. Louis
Trish Kohl, PhD – Washington University in St. Louis

Q&A



Melissa Jonson-Reid, PhD's work focuses on understanding how to improve the behavioral, educational and health outcomes associated with childhood exposure to trauma, particularly abuse and neglect. Her work responds to child maltreatment as a serious, prevalent public health concern. Jonson-Reid has practice experience in both domestic violence counseling and program administration as a school social worker in California; she currently provides evaluation consultation for state and community organizations.

At the Brown School, Jonson-Reid is the chair of the Violence and Injury Prevention concentration in the Master of Social Work program and supervises an interdisciplinary Violence and Injury certificate, which involves collaboration with the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies. She also teaches the foundation statistics course in the PhD program, co-teaches a Transdisciplinary ProblemSolving course on child maltreatment, and serves as chair or member of several doctoral student committees.



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Patricia Kohl, PhD's scholarship is focused on strengthening, implementing, and sustaining evidence-based interventions that improve the quality of care for vulnerable families. Through her research, which is informed by years of clinical practice with children and families, she seeks to close the gap between research and community-based practice. Kohl is affiliated with two research centers at the Brown School: the Center for Mental Health Services Research and the Center for Injury and Violence Prevention. She is also affiliated with the National Institute of Mental Health's Implementation Research Institute.

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Funding Acknowledgments

- PACT-STL is funded by ACF through the *Community Collaboration to Strengthen Families and Prevent Child Maltreatment* mechanism
 - Vision for Children at Risk: Grantee
 - CICM: Limited evaluation
- RWJF Systems for Action funds allows us to also
 - Evaluate how the Collaborative works to improve child and family level outcomes
 - Conduct more advanced statistical analysis of data collected in the parent project

Acknowledging our S4A Multidisciplinary Project Team

- **Melissa Jonson-Reid, MSW, Ph.D. (PI)** is Ralph & Muriel Pumphrey Professor of Social Work Research, PI of the Center for Innovation in Child Maltreatment Research, Policy and Training (P50HD096719) and a nationally known researcher in child maltreatment and cross-sector services research.
- **Patricia Kohl, MSW, Ph.D. (Co-PI)** is Associate Professor, Lead Evaluator for PACT-STL, and a leading expert in strengthening, implementing, and sustaining evidence-based interventions that improve the quality of care for children with behavioral health needs and/or CPS involvement.
- **Adrienne Atzemis, MD, (INV)** is Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine at the School of Medicine. Dr. Atzemis is board certified in child abuse pediatrics and helps lead the state education for health care providers in the area of child maltreatment.
- **Ellis Ballard, MSW & MPH (INV)**, is Director of the Social System Design Lab at the Brown School. He has extensive expertise in the use of group model building and related analytic software
- **Derek S. Brown, Ph.D. (INV)**, is a health economist and Associate Professor in the Public Health Program. Dr. Brown is a leading expert on the economics of child maltreatment and health as well as health care financing, access and quality for Medicaid populations.
- **John N. Constantino, M.D. (INV)** is Blanche F. Ittleson Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, Director of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and a nationally known expert in child behavioral health and development.
- **Barry Rosenberg, MSW (INV)**, is Professor of Practice at the Brown School with over 37 years of leadership experience in the non-profit sector prior to joining the faculty.
- **Sanaria Sulaiman, CEO of Vision for Children at Risk (Consultant)**, is the head of the lead agency and convener for PACT-STL.
- **Nancy Weaver, MPH, PhD (Consultant)** is Professor and Associate Dean of Public Health at Saint Louis University and is an expert in pediatric injury and public health messaging and dissemination.

Overarching Purpose of PACT-STL

- To develop, implement, and evaluate strategies that prevent child maltreatment, reduce entry into the public child welfare system, and enhance overall well-being outcomes of children and families.
- Key strategies:
 - Increase the capacity of the St. Louis community to provide evidence-based services
 - Reduce barriers to existing community services by better aligning funding with the needs of families and influencing policy and practice changes.

Overarching Purpose of PACT-STL



PACT-STL
Parents and
Children Together-
St. Louis

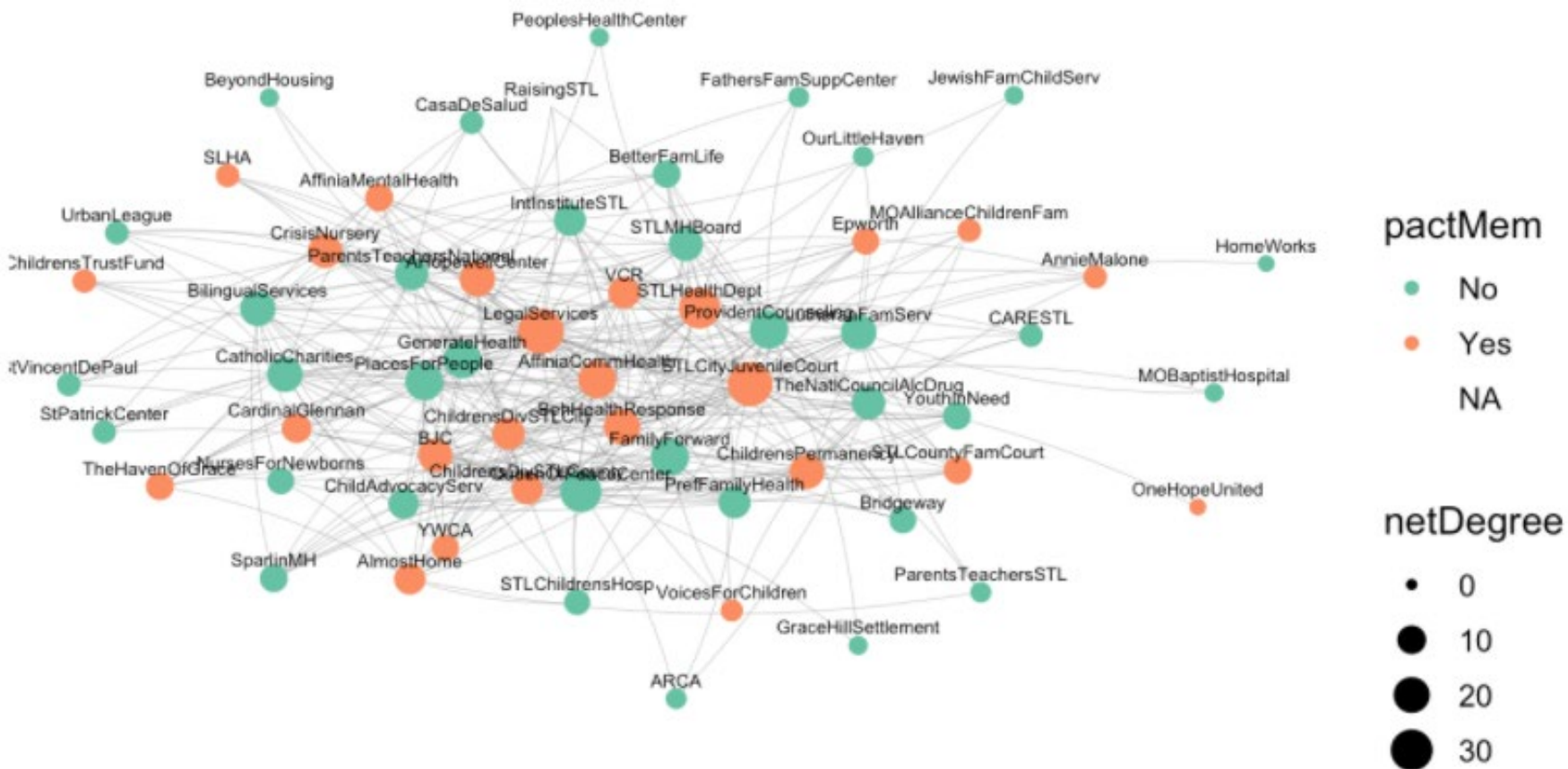
PACT-STL focuses on providing preventive services in a two county St. Louis Region, including St. Louis City and St. Louis County.

Core components:

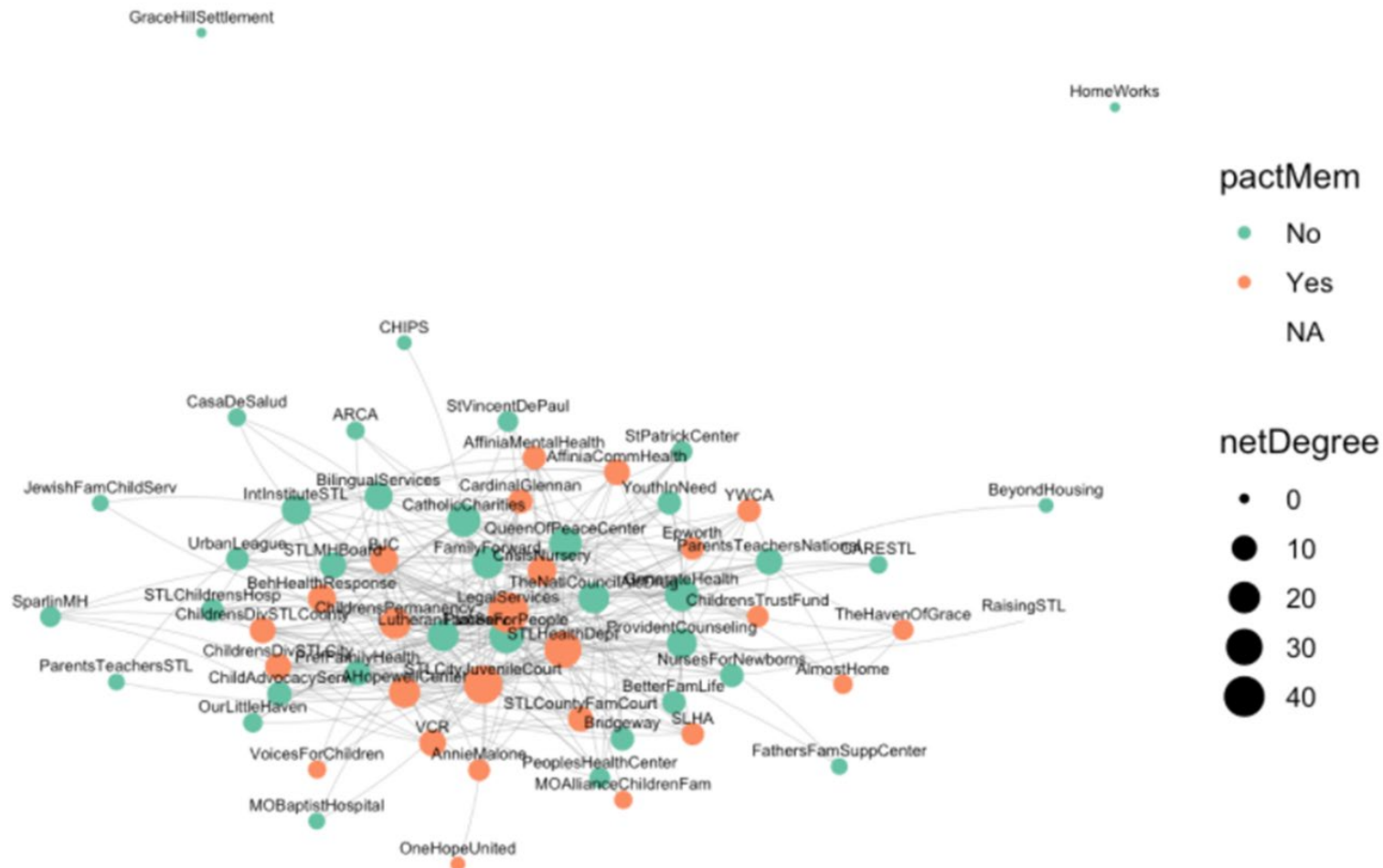
- Parent engagement
- Parent empowerment
- Parenting education

- Examine alignment of services and funding through content analyses of documents and group model building and network analyses with agencies triangulated with parent stakeholder data. **TODAYS FOCUS**
- Understand community level change in child outcomes, controlling for degree of alignment, and program intensity using geospatial analyses. **WAITING FOR STATE DATA for CHILD WELFARE AND HEALTH**
- Model outcomes and cost effectiveness by service use using linked administrative data supplemented with interviews with families in areas of high or low PACT-STL intensity. **YEAR 3**

- Summary
 - 62 organizations in the network
 - 40% were members of PACT-STL
- Network contact
 - Pre-COVID: Organizations had at least monthly if not more frequent contact
 - During COVID: Network contact decreased by 10%
- Collaboration
 - Organizations were collaborating with a mean of 8.9 other organizations



In-covid PACT contact network (links are monthly or more often)



- Most organizations in the network ($n = 41$; 66.1%) served more than 100 children and most (48; 77.4%) had been operating for more than 20 years.
- There were 360 ties among organizations in the pre-covid network (density = .19) and 341 ties among organizations (density = .17) during COVID.
- Connections decreased during covid for all organization types except for legal advocacy, which increased slightly; decreases in connections were the greatest in health care and housing focused organizations.

- Overview
 - Four focus groups hosted
 - Three with caregivers
 - One with VCR staff who are caregivers (two of whom had lived CW experience)
 - 26 participants
 - Purpose:
 - To learn about how agencies in the St. Louis region work together to meet the needs of families and the trust families have (or do not have) in these agencies

- Analysis Themes
 - Characteristics of the organizations (e.g., resource availability, culturally responsive services, community investment, communication and transparency, and organizational culture of caring/not caring)
 - Characteristics of individual providers (e.g., competence, relational/engagement)
 - Anti-Blackness
 - Discrimination and bias
 - Navigating the system/Perceptions of collaboration

- Quotes exemplify organizational culture of “not caring”

“It kind of goes together, being responsive, like [name removed] said, being responsive, and then really listening to the consumer, the client, the family, the parent all stems from this place of really being passionate about your job. That’s what makes people trust organizations. You trust places that you feel that genuine: I’m passionate about what I do. It’s not just about money.”

- Quotes exemplify organizational culture of “not caring”
“You tend to trust agencies more when they follow up with you. Nobody wanna be begging. You know what I’m sayin’? You don’t wanna be too prideful, but you don’t wanna be stalkin’ the people, calling them, and they never call you back. They make you not even wanna engage with them, but if somebody is callin’ in and they’re checkin’ in on you, and they’re sayin’, “Ooh, I ain’t heard from her. Let me give her a call,” that make you more trusting, but when they just kind of push you off—they’re busy; they’re meetin’ all week; they’re in trainin’; they don’t call you back—then that can turn into days and weeks and months, it’s like you don’t care.”

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“I had to advocate for myself because nobody was gonna advocate for me. Part of that, played a part of that was race. They didn’t wanna hear a young black girl, at that, that got multiple kids.”

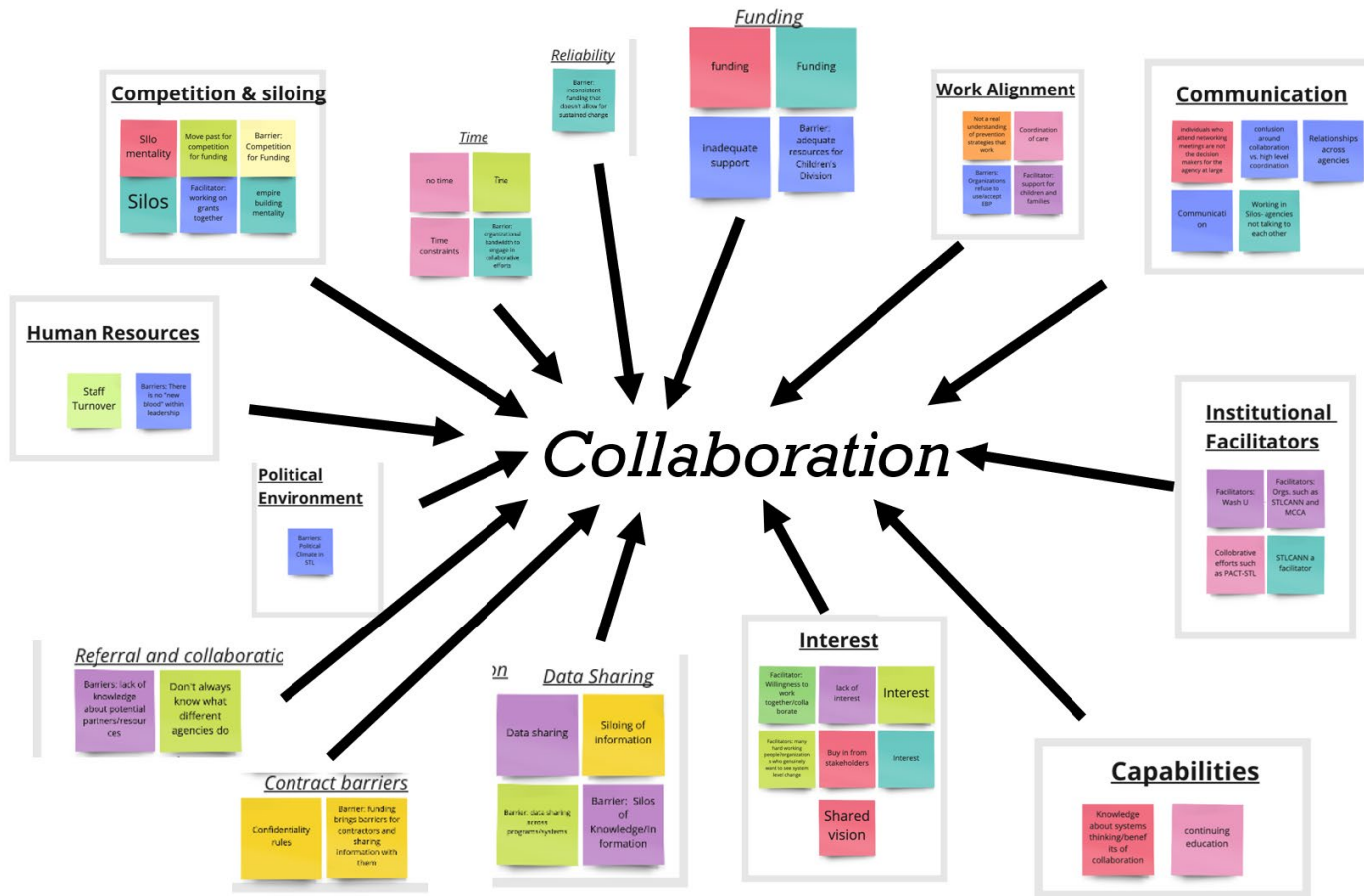
“A lot of times, with organizations, when you are black they’re really not tryin’ to hear you at all, period, even when you’re tryin’ to do somethin’ positive.”

- If they communicated amongst each other and they could spread that information to us when we needed it, that would stop us from having to search everywhere and all these dead ends. It would be helpful if they knew a little bit more.

- Differences in perception of participants for interaction. Community members were asking for answers about specific cases not initially problem solving broader issues. Providers were unprepared for this which created some tension.
- However the group did come up with suggestions that garnered broad interest such as pushing out resource information through schools to enhance prevention.
- Group is processing how to best structure the prevention working group discussions going forward.

- Summary
 - Two group model building sessions held
- Purpose
 - Elicit barriers and facilitators to meaningful collaboration within the PACT-STL Collaborative network

Group Model Building



Structural Insight 1: Tragedy of the Commons

Legend

X $\xrightarrow{+}$ Y Change in the same direction

X $\xrightarrow{-}$ Y Change in opposite direction

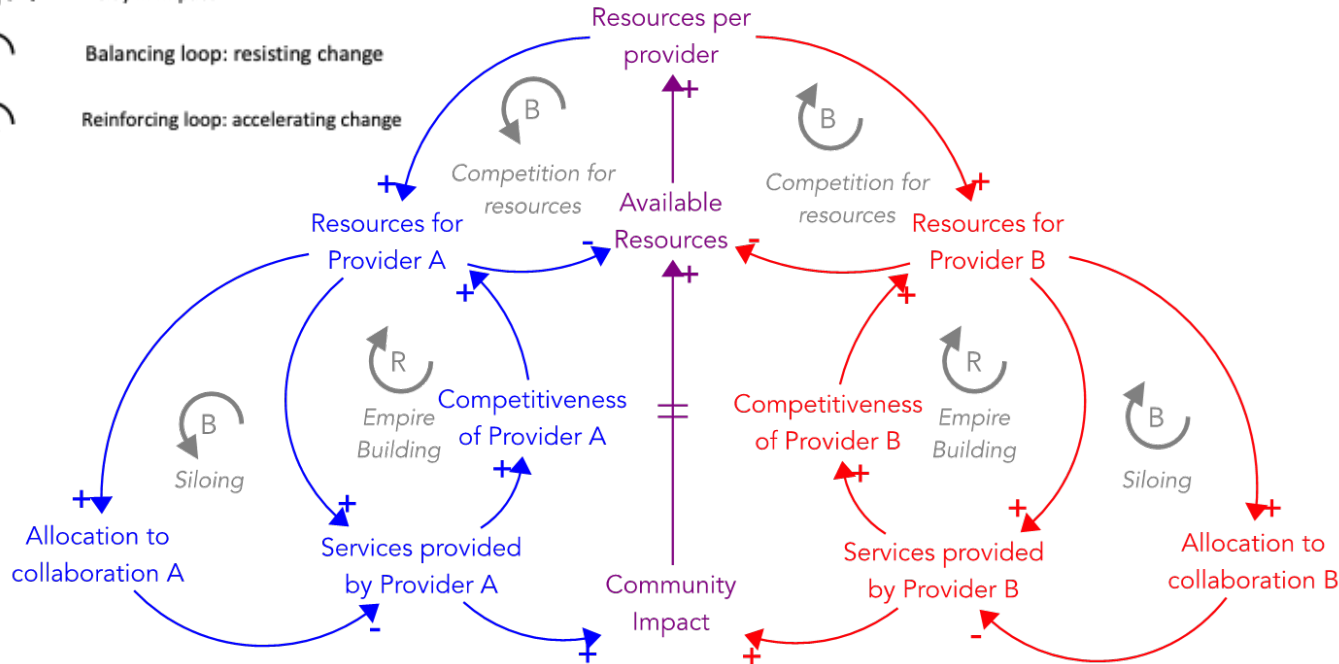
X $\xrightarrow{||}$ Y Delay in impact



Balancing loop: resisting change



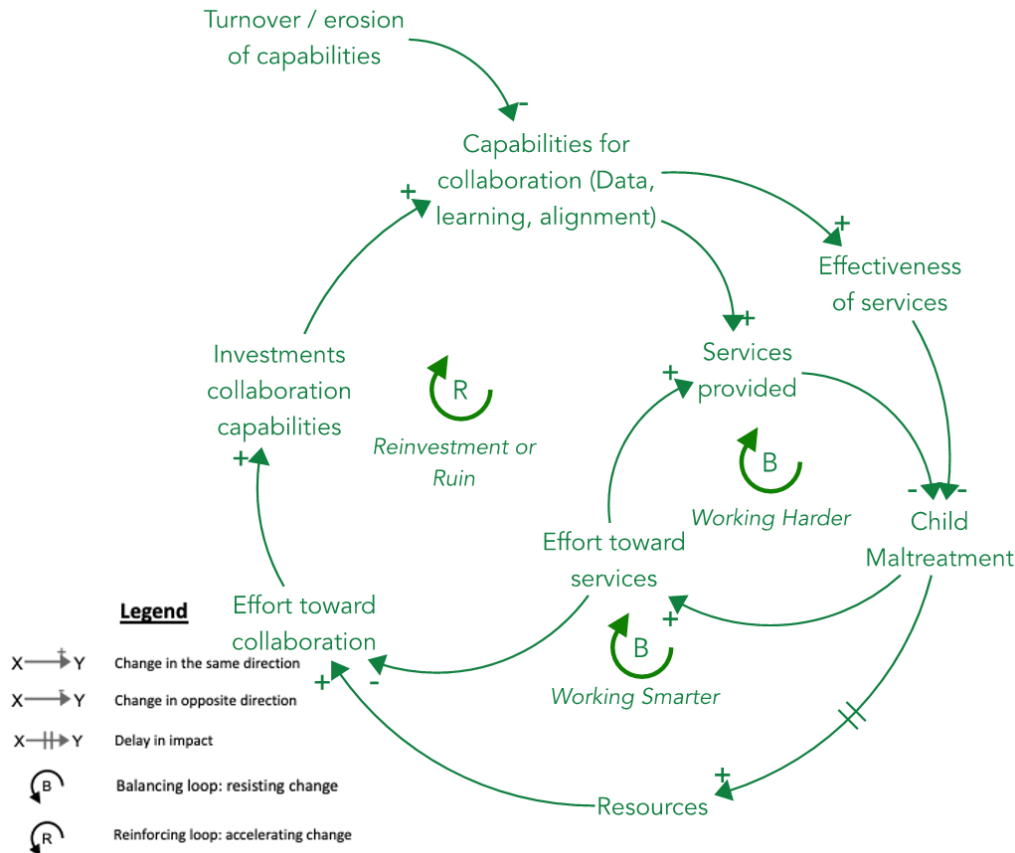
R Reinforcing loop: accelerating change



Key Points:

- Individual providers are seeking funding to provide more resources, services and to remain competitive
- Each provider has an incentive to grow to protect their piece of the pie
- The pressure to deliver services dis-incentivizes investment in collaboration
- Without collaboration, organizations become more siloed, hurting overall system performance

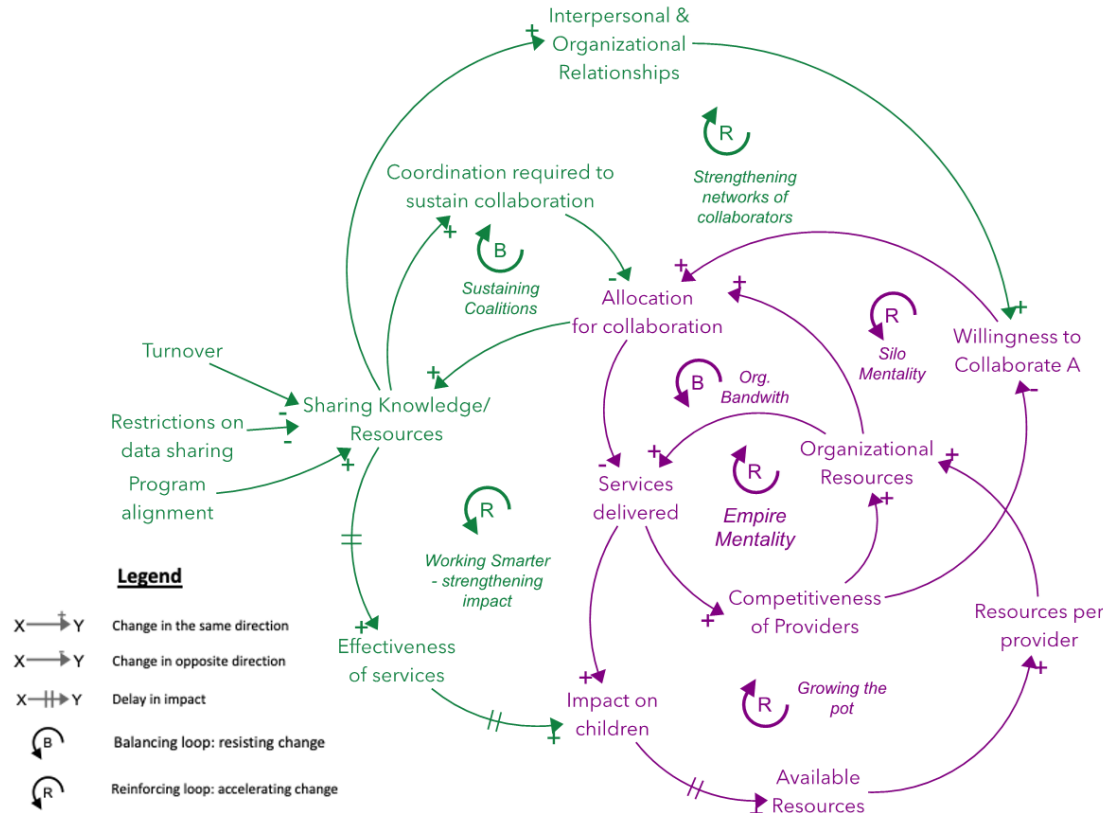
Structural Insight 2: Capability Trap



Key Points:

- Organizations face tradeoff decisions about how to spend time and money: providing services or investing in collaboration
- Many organizations can get caught in a trap where they work harder and harder, but let their data, learning, and collaboration capabilities erode
- Fixing this “capability trap” may require facing worse-before-better choices

Proposed Description of the Challenge of Deepening Collaboration

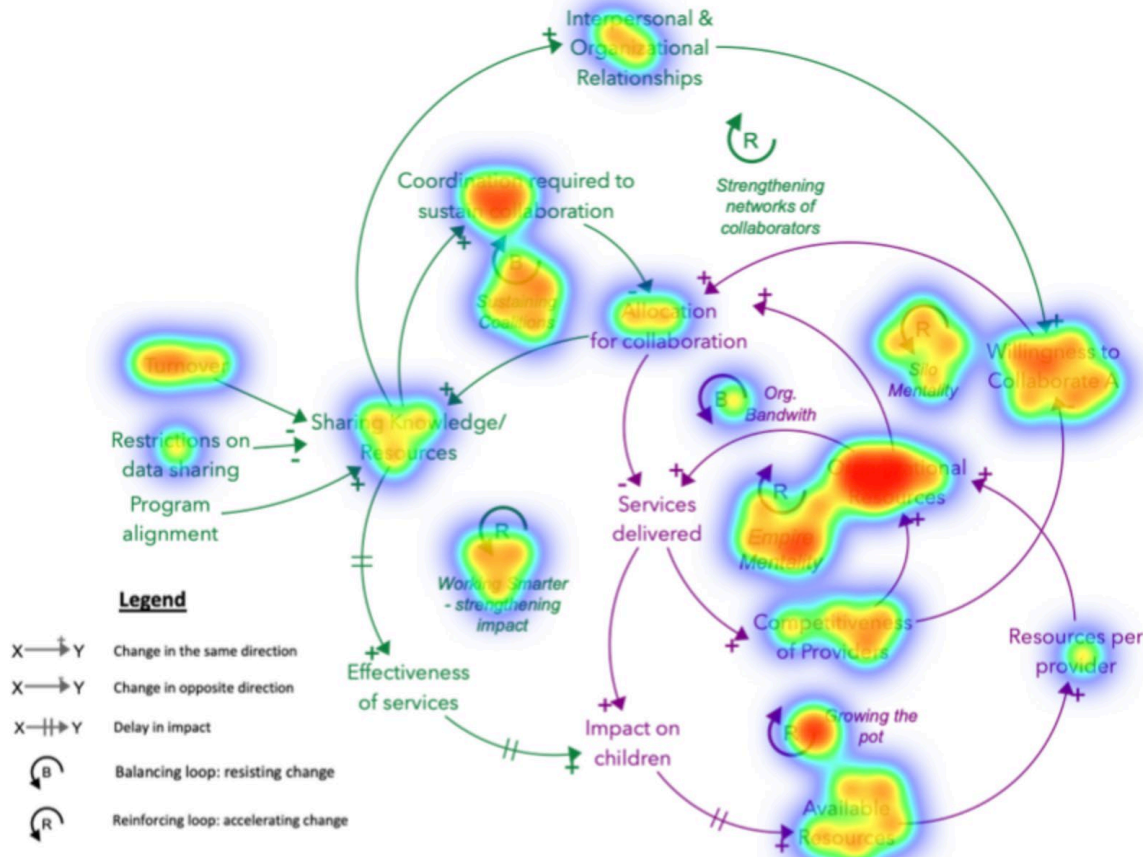


Key Points:

- This map is a hypothesis – it is not complete!
- We tried to capture the underlying structural barriers and potential traps that limit deepening collaboration
- We will have time to challenge, refine, and adapt this model
- The challenge will be to use this to inspire creative thinking about structural changes to promote collaboration

- Intervention points to enhance collaboration (Session #2)
 - Transparency and accountability to build understanding and trust specifically in terms of funding, reporting, and resource-sharing
 - Role of institutional racism and an uncertain political environment in St. Louis City
 - “Wrong Pocket” problem in collaboration
 - Persistent difference between agencies who invest in collaboration and those who benefit
 - Shifting time horizons to address the problem of short-term funding and planning in inhibiting collaboration
 - Shift funding time horizons to conceptualizing impact over 5-10 years as opposed to quarters-years and develop common language and vision for systems-level impact

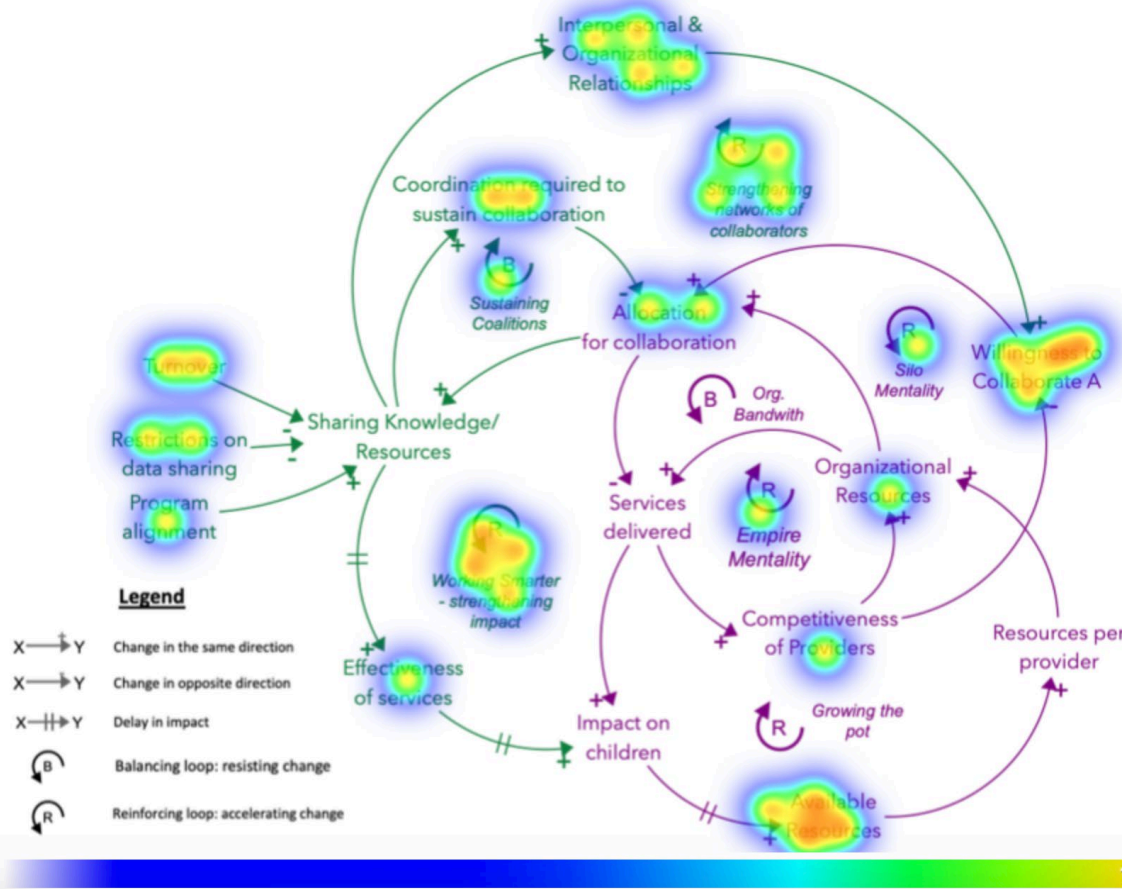
Q1. Where in the map are the most challenging barriers for deepening collaboration?



Top Vote Getters

- Organizational resources
- Willingness to collaborate
- Growing the pot
- Coordination required to sustain collaboration
- Sustaining coalitions
- Silo mentality

Q2. Where on the map should this group focus interventions to promote collaboration?



Top Vote Getters

- Willingness to collaborate
- Interpersonal and organizational relationships
- Strengthening networks of collaborators
- Available resources
- Working smarter – strengthening impact

- **Funding Resources**

- More & better allocation of funding
- More awareness of community resources
- Less uncertainty

- **Accountability**

- Monitoring allocation of funding
- Tracking outcomes
- Checks and balances for corrupt leadership

- **Ownership & Participation**

- Staff ownership
- Flatter hierarchies
- Trust in leadership, staff, and other organizations

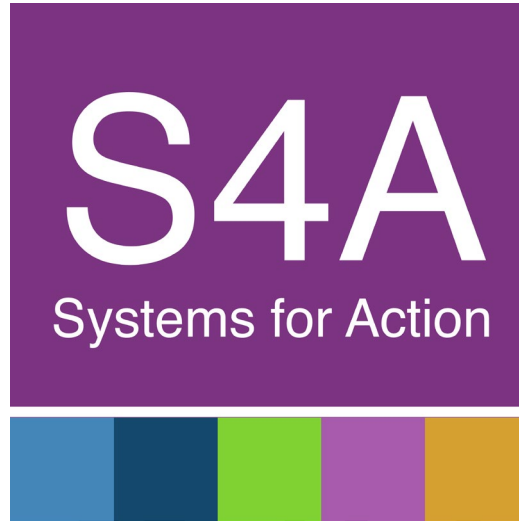
- **Reduced Structural/Institutional Racism**

- **Competition**

- Less turf wars
- Creating value for all members so that they willingly come to the table

- Community input is very focused on perceptions of system responsiveness and respect; accountability when mistakes are made by agencies; better definitions; more prevention resources
- Agency collaborators very focused on funding fairness and accountability related to funding- in part related to structural racism issues in community
- Agency collaborators also discussed creating value in collaboration for the agency and building trust

Questions?



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Upcoming Webinars



July 7
12 pm ET

Systems in Focus Panel:
Local Public Health Governing Boards



Link to Register: https://ucdenver.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UUfpH0LITiarIkKVw7vWHw

Systems for Action is a National Program Office of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and a collaborative effort of the Colorado School of Public Health, administered by the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Aurora, CO.



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